Silicon Times Report

"The Original Independent OnLine Magazine"
(Since 1987)

December 27, 1996   No.1252

12/27/96 STR 1252   The Original Independent OnLine Magazine!

- CPU Industry Report - Super Mario 64 - Guinness Review
- NEW Shareware List - Berlitz Spanish - Little Brother Watching
- Perfect Spanish   - Amazing Math   - JoltPak Coming Soon
- B2000 Cheats!   - Twisted Metal 2 - Classics & Entertainment

PACBELL to use ASDL
FCC Nixes Net Access Fee
Apple Brings Steve Jobs Home

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                                    The Publisher, Staff & Editors

Florida Lotto - LottoMan v1.35
Results: 12/21/96: 5 of 6 numbers, 5 three number matches, 1 four number match

From the Editor's Desk...

    Happy New Year everyone! May the coming year be filled with health, success and prosperity. This week's issue is a little on the lean side due to the Holidays. But it also talks of some of the interesting activities we plan

for the New Year. Please, when you go out to party, use a designated driver they

really are lifesavers. Mine and yours! Again.

                         Warmest of Holiday Wishes to all.

                                                           Ralph..

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STReport is now ready to offer much more in the way of serving the Networks, Online Services and Internet's vast, fast growing site list and userbase. We now have our very own WEB/NewsGroup/FTP Site and although it is in its early stages of construction, do stop by and have a look see. Since We've received numerous requests to receive STReport from a wide variety of Internet addressees, we were compelled to put together an Internet distribution/mailing list for those who wished to receive STReport on a regular basis, the file is ZIPPED, then UUENCODED. Unfortunately, we've also received a number of opinions that the UUENCODING was a real pain to deal with. So, as of October 01, 1995, you'll be able to download STReport directly from our very own SERVER & WEB Site. While there, be sure to join our STR AutoMailer list.

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                     STReport Headline News

                LATE BREAKING INDUSTRY-WIDE NEWS

              Weekly Happenings in the Computer World

                  Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

                  Copyright Group Sidesteps Crisis

A potential crisis on the Internet has been sidestepped by negotiators in
Geneva who have agreed to make it legal for users of copyright materials to
keep them (at least temporarily) in their personal computers.

Reporting from the three-week negotiating session of the United Nations'
World Intellectual Property Organization, Associated Press writer Alexander
G. Higgins notes, "Libraries, 'Net 'surfers' and groups providing Internet
access won a big victory in the final treaties: Temporary copies of

copyright materials that computers automatically make when a user is browsing the World Wide Web will not be considered violations of copyrights."

Higgins says that if the provision had not been deleted, "any time anyone looked at copyright material on a computer -- including schoolchildren at their local library -- it could have constituted a violation of international copyright law, opponents said. That might well have killed the Internet."

The latest accords also bolster protection against software piracy worldwide and lay the groundwork for increased commerce over the Internet. Adam Eisgrau of the American Library Association told the wire service the main achievement of the negotiations was a balance between copyright protection and the needs of consumers, noting the treaties protect copyright owners who "create wonderful works that enrich all of society, but tempered with that protection a balance affording access to information."

But, writes Higgins, the treaties did not resolve whether databases are eligible for copyright as are creative materials. Says AP, "Extending copyright protection to facts would give professional sports leagues and stock exchanges exclusive rights to their statistics, opponents say. But proponents argue they have a right to recoup the investments they've made to compile the facts."

FCC Nixes Net Access Fee

The Federal Communications Commission has tentatively decided not to impose fees on Internet service providers for use of local telephne lines, reports the Reuters news service. "The commission raised the specific question of whether ISP's should pay access charges as we currently understand them," Kevin Werbach, counsel for new technology at the commission, told Reuters. The FCC "tentatively concluded that the answer is no."

On Tuesday, the commission issued a notice of proposed rulemaking setting out two possible plans for reducing access fees currently imposed on long distance telephone companies. "Local phone companies had pressed to have the access fee applied to Internet service companies," notes Reuters. "The phone companies argued that consumers using the Internet were getting a free ride and tying up local lines with lengthy calls."

Feds Track Fugitives on the Net

The Justice Department and Voice of America, having already set up an international fugitive alert service, now are expanding to include a related World Wide Web site. United Press International notes the department and Voice of America last August launched a weekly broadcast, International Crime Alert, around the world in about 50 languages.

Now, once a fugitive is featured on the broadcast, his or her photograph and identifying information also is posted on the home page of the United States Information Agency (http://www.usia.gov). UPI says the Justice Department's "fugitive unit" in the Office of International Affairs will be coordinating extradition for high-profile U.S. and foreign fugitives.

Jobs Set to Rejoin Apple

Apple Computer Inc. co-founder Steve Jobs is about to prove that you actually can go home again. The Los Angeles Times, citing unidentified

sources, reports that Jobs will join the computer maker as a part- time
consultant and "technology guru." Jobs' task will be to help Apple update
its aging Macintosh system software. Jobs, who founded Apple with Steve
Wozniak in the 1970s, left the company in 1985 after coming out on the
losing end of a power struggle with then CEO John Sculley.

Apple Brings Steve Jobs Home

Stunning the compute industry, Apple Computer Inc. has agreed to acquire
NeXT Software Inc. for $400 million, reuniting Apple with its co-founder,
Steve Jobs. "The acquisition," says Kourosh Karimkhany of the Reuter News
Service, "will give Apple the software technology it needs to revamp the
Macintosh personal computer, which has lost much of its technological
luster to PCs running software from Microsoft Corp."

At Apple's Cupertino, California, headquarters, Jobs told the wire service,
"The Mac has provided the innovation that the industry has been feeding off
for the last 10 years. It's time for someone to come up with innovation to
drive the industry forward. Who better than Apple?" Jobs, who founded
Apple with Steve Wozniak in his garage 20 years ago, led Apple through its
early years until he was fired by the company's board in 1985. Apple now
will pay $350 million, mostly in cash and a little stock, for Redwood City,
California, NeXT, and will pay off NeXT's $50 million debt.

Jobs will come back to Apple part-time to lead an effort to rewrite the
fundamental software of the Macintosh, reporting to Apple Chairman Gilbert
Amelio. Apple will base much of its next-generation operating system on
Nextstep, Karimkhany reports, quoting Amelio as saying NeXT's technology
will not only provide many of the software bells and whistles that Apple
needs to compete with Microsoft's Windows, but will attract outside
software companies to write more titles for the Mac.

"Without question, the technology at NeXT was the superior technology, by a
significant amount," Amelio said. As reported, Apple had been for months
looking outside for help after having abandoned an unfinished operating
system code-named "Copland." The company looked at operating system
technology and multimedia software from companies such as Sun Microsystems
Inc. and closely held Be Inc. Jobs also helped co-found Pixar Animation
Studios, a production studio that uses powerful computers instead of
drawings. The company made last year's hit "Toy Story." He told Reuters he
will continue to run Pixar.

Newspaper Buys Prodigy Division

For undisclosed terms, the Internet classified advertising division of
Prodigy Services Corp. has been acquired by Thomson Newspapers. Thomson
officials told The Associated Press the company will use Prodigy's
classified ad system for its own newspapers and also will sell the product
to other newspapers, enabling them to set up their own advertising site on
the Internet. The wire service notes some 20 newspapers already use the
system, including the Houston Chronicle. Based in Stamford, Connecticut,
Thomson Newspapers publishes 85 dailies, including The Globe and Mail of
Toronto, and several non-dailies in the United States and Canada.

Netscape Previewing New Release

A preview release of the new Netscape Communicator software is to be posted
Monday, giving Netscape Communications Corp. the jump on rival Microsoft
Corp. in the latest salvo of the "browser wars." Reporting from Palo Alto,
California, the Reuter News Service says Communicator includes the latest

version of the Mountain View, California-based company's popular software for browsing the Web, Netscape Navigator 4.0, and also is expected to contain electronic mail, a Web editing tool, its Collabra news reader and audio conferencing software.

Meanwhile, a Microsoft spokeswoman told the wire service a preview release of its Internet Explorer 4.0 browser would be available sometime in the first quarter of 1997, with the final version posted on the Internet by the end of the second quarter. Notes Reuters, "Netscape's Communicator is in part designed to provide a broader suite of Internet capabilities as Netscape moves beyond a battle over browsers further into the territory of corporate intranets, internal networks based on Internet technology."

Netscape Offers Promised Preview

The promised preview edition of Netscape Communications Corp.'s new Communicator software for use on the Internet and in corporate networks known as intranet has been formally posted on the company's site on the World Wide Web. Release of the test software - - which aims to extend its Navigator browser software by adding richer messaging, editing and collaboration features -- demonstrated Netscape was keeping its rollout on track, analysts have told the Reuter News Service.

For instance, Net analyst Michael Parekh at Goldman Sachs told the wire service that eventually much richer use of Internet technology will make the early browsers now used seem primitive, adding, "What we typically thought about as the Web browser two years ago is going to seem like Pong is in terms of video games today," referring to the video game Pong, which was introduced in the early 1970s.

UPI sans the Communicator combines open electronic mail, or e-mail, with a suite of browser programs that enable computer users to edit Internet pages, engage in audio conferencing, update schedules, and access news through a filtering system. Industry analysts expect the software, which is due to be introduced as a final product by the end of March, to help usher in a whole new form of collaborative use of the Internet.

Number of ISPs Doubles to 3,100

The ranks of Internet service providers doubled to some 3,100 this year, surprising some analysts who predicted the entry of larger companies and the move to $19.95 flat-rate pricing would slash the number of ISPs. "The smaller ISPs tend to do a better job of hand-holding people onto the Internet," says publisher Jack Rickard, whose Boardwatch magazine in Littleton, Colorado, published the findings.

Rickard told Franklin Paul of the Reuter News Service, "We hear stories of people driving out to (a subscriber's) house, setting them up and demo-ing in their living rooms. You can't do that on a national scale." Paul notes industry giants, like AT&T's Worldnet and Netcom On-Line Communications Inc., command the lion's share of subscribers, with upwards of 500,000 subscribers each, while online services like CompuServe, America Online and Prodigy have millions of customers.

By contrast, the average ISP has only about 2,200 subscribers and "instead of competing on price, they focus on other features like customer service and easy access," says Reuters. Rickard notes customer service is one of the biggest problems for the large firms, which often contract with other firms to provide customer assistance, adding, "Because of who they are, they are attracting the less sophisticated user, so they spend eight or 10

hours on the phone with a customer trying to get them online -- only to get $20 a month from them" in subscription fees.

While Rickard predicts growth in ISPs will continue for another year or two as the Internet lures more users, Paul notes some analysts believe the growth may slow sooner as major players continue to grow, regional Bell phone companies enter the business and industry consolidation accelerates.

Info Publishers' Income Slides

Cowles/Simba Information reports that 47 major information publishers experienced an aggregate 94.6 percent decline in net income in 1996's third quarter. The Stamford, Connecticut, market researcher says the companies had a total net income of $22 million for the quarter ended Sept. 30, compared to $422 million in same period in 1995. "Many companies underwent higher than usual operating costs this quarter as a result of restructuring to better compete, including increased marketing spending and write-offs of non-profitable businesses," says Lynn Dougherty, a Cowles/Simba Information analyst.

Twenty-one of the 47 companies surveyed experienced net losses or declines in net income, including America Online, CompuServe, CheckFree and A.D.A.M. Software. Aggregate revenue for the 47 companies grew 15.9 percent, rising to $5.0 billion from $4.3 billion in 1995's third quarter. Revenue fell for 10 of the 47 companies. According to Cowles/Simba Information statistics, subscription-based news and information providers such as Desktop Data, M.A.I.D, Individual and PC Quote saw 30 percent or better growth in the third quarter over the previous year's comparable time period, attributable to increased subscriber counts and online and Internet usage. "We can expect similar growth from this category in the first half of 1997," says Dougherty.

Christmas E-Mail Overloads Web Site

Boston book publisher Houghton Mifflin Co. has learned a lesson this holiday season about the power of electronic mail. The company at first feared it would be ignored when it offered to donate a book to a children's hospital for every 25 e-mailed holiday wishes it received by Dec. 31 at its site on the Internet's World Wide Web.

However, says The Associated Press, instead of the few thousand messages it hoped for, Houghton Mifflin collected morethan 67,000 in the two weeks after Thanksgiving. Said Erica Khonke, marketing coordinator for Houghton Mifflin Interactive, "All of a sudden, everybody in America was sending us e-mail."

In fact, the volume so overwhelmed Houghton Mifflin's computer, the publisher was forced to route messages to another computer. Then on Dec. 11, the publisher declared the campaign a success and closed its mailbox, saying it could no longer keep up. AP quotes Houghton Mifflin as saying it will ship some 2,500 children's books to hospitals around the country.

Santa's Super Sites Socko Surfing

During this Christmas season, more than 2.5 million people around the globe have clicked into Santa Claus' new digital digs. The free site (http://www.christmas.com) has been managed by McGrath/Power Public Relations in California's Silicon Valley, where Terri Foos Cook told United Press International, "The most popular area is e-mail to Santa. Every

person who sends a legitimate letter will receive an e-mail response. Last
year, hundreds of thousands of children, of all ages and writing in dozens
of languages, e-mailed Santa." Also popular have been the "Countdown to
Christmas" feature, which gives days, hours, minutes and seconds before
Christmas, and an area explaining how the season is celebrated in other
cultures and by other religions. UPI notes the site is sponsored by The
Worldcom Group, a consortium of independent public relations agencies.

Computer Error Leads to Feast

Senior citizens in Thermopolis, Wyoming, literally ate high on the hog this
week because of a computer error, and it all started with Florence
Sinclair's annual Christmas ham. Every year, Florence's kids send her a
ham, but this year, United Parcel Service came to the door with 33 of them.
"Well, I panicked," she told The Associated Press. "What am I going to do
with 33 hams?"

Initially, she had UPS take them back, then called the supplier, HoneyBaked
Ham Co. of Holland, Ohio. However, HoneyBaked didn't want the hams back,
and she would have to take all of them or none. Someone suggested she
donate the hams to the Worland Food Bank, but that agency couldn't handle
that much perishable food, AP reports. Then she thought of senior centers
in Thermopolis and Worland, and recruited neighbors and friends to fetch
the hams from UPS and deliver them.

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            INTERNATIONAL COPYRIGHT ACCORDS MEET WITH APPROVAL

Negotiators in Geneva have approved international copyright accords that
boost protection against software piracy worldwide and lay the groundwork
for increased commerce over the Internet. Libraries, Web surfers and
Internet service providers won a major victory in the final rounds, with
the acknowledgment that the temporary copies of copyrighted materials
automatically made by computers while browsing the Web are not considered
violations of copyright. The treaties protect copyright owners while also
encourage content developers to "create wonderful works that enrich all of
society, but tempered with that protection a balance affording access to
information," says the American Library Association's legal counsel Adam
Eisgrau.   (Tampa Tribune 21 Dec 96 A6)

                     JOBS RETURNS HOME (PART-TIME)

Apple Computer has hired Steve Jobs as a consultant and technology director
to refurbish the Mac operating system. Apple will buy Jobs' Next
operating software, betting that sexy features like its object orientation
and multitasking capabilities will entice more software developers to write
snazzy new applications programs for Macs. Describing himself as ''just a
part-time consultant," Jobs adds: "My job is not savior." He says that
Apple CEO Gil Amelio "asked me to give him some advice ... I'd love to help
Apple.'' Jobs will not have an operational role nor a seat on the board
of directors. (San Jose Mercury News 22 Dec 96) Apple had originally
tried to hire Jean-Louis Gassee's Be Inc., but the companies deadlocked
over price. The preliminary Wall Street reaction from the president of a
capital management firm: is that "this is a really make-or-break situation
for the company." (Investor's Business Daily 23 Dec 96 A7)

TELEDESIC MIGHT GET OFF THE GROUND

Teledesic, the grandiose 840-satellite "Internet in the Sky" system
envisioned by Bill Gates and Craig McCaw, says it is on the verge of
receiving its long-delayed operating license from the FCC, and hopes to
line up its first satellite launches in 1997. "We expect to nail our
license any day now," says the company's president. "You'll see a big
flurry of activity soon after that." Teledesic has been waiting for FCC
approval since 1994, when the company first announced its plans to offer
international corporations data rates of between two million and 1.2
billion bits per second, using a giant fleet of low Earth orbit satellites.
Although some industry observers doubt the Teledesic venture will ever get
off the ground, McCaw and Gates last week showed their continued support
by doubling their investment in the project to 37.6% of the company.
(Wall Street Journal 20 Dec 96 B6)

HAYES GETS A SECOND CHANCE

Former industry leader Hayes Modems is trying for a comeback. After
emerging from Chapter 11 bankruptcy proceedings with a new management team
and a $35 million investment from three Asian technology companies, Hayes
plans to provide corporate clients not only modems, but remote access
software for seamless outside connections to corporate networks. "Most of
our competitors are worried about building the access, but that's just the
plumbing. We want to create the software to make the plumbing work," says
company founder Dennis Hayes. Hayes predicts it will have 56K modems
available by February -- the same time the faster modems will be debuted
by competitor U.S. Robotics -- and is planning an all-out assault on
networking heavyweights 3Com and Cisco Systems for remote-access projects.
(Business Week 23 Dec 96 p84)

ACLU TO CHALLENGE STATE "INDECENCY" LAWS

The American Civil Liberties Union will challenge two state laws in New
York and Virginia that are intended to thwart Internet "indecency."   The
New York law bans distribution of indecent material to minors over the
Internet; the Virginia law forbids state employees to use state-owned
computers to access sexual material on the Internet. The ACLU says that
both laws are unconstitutional restrictions on free speech.   Sometime in
the next few months, the Supreme Court will hear the U.S. Justice
Department's appeal of a federal court ruling that the Communications Decency
Act, part of the Telecommunications Reform Act of 1996 that was passed by
Congress this past fall, is unconstitutional. (PC World 20 Dec 96)

DOT-EDU, DOT-ORG, DOT-COM, DOT-SOMETHING NEW

The Internet Society's International Ad Hoc Committee on domain names is
proposing that seven new top- evel domains (such as .edu, .org, .com) be
added to the Internet naming structure. After the introduction of   he
additional 10 new top-level 3- to 5-letter domains (not yet selected), ten
people or organizations could register similar names -- thereby presumably
reducing the number of disputes over the us of popular or trademarked
names. The committee is recommending that an unlimited number of firms be
authorized to register the new addresses, a process that is now being
handled exclusively by Network Solutions Inc. in Herndon, Virginia. (CNN
Interactive 20 Dec 96) < http://www.iahc.org >

PAC BELL TO USE ADSL FOR INTERNET ACCESS

Pacific Bell, as part of a consortium including Ameritech, BellSouth, and

Southwestern Bell, is buying ADSL (asymmetrical digital subscriber line)
technology from Alcatel Telecom in Richardson, Texas, in order to provide
Internet access at speeds up to 1.5 million bits per second and to allow
simultaneous phone conversations over the same telephone line. (New York
Times 24 Dec 96 C3)

INFOSEEK PLANS FREE NEWS SERVICE

Infoseek Corp. will offer several free news services to corporate customers
as part of its plan to differentiate itself from competitors in the Web
searching business. One service, called Daily News, will allow users to
pick and choose among six news sources -- the New York Times, the
Washington Post, the Los Angeles Times, the Chicago Tribune, the San Jose
Mercury News and MSNBC. Initially, Daily News will offer access only to
articles published in the current edition, but the company hopes to expand
its service to include archives going back several weeks, featuring news
from 1,000 sources. That leaves it only 994 more deals to cut with
content providers. (Wall Street Journal 24 Dec 96 B6)

LITTLEBROTHER IS WATCHING

Workers who spend more time surfing the Net than attending to the bottom
line are in for a comeuppance. A new software product called
LittleBrother tracks and analyzes Web usage by employees and blocks
selected sites. Made by Calif.-based Kansmen Corp., LittleBrother can
tell who is playing network games, who uses   chat rooms, and who is
downloading non-work materials. The software currently available runs on a
Windows NT computer linked to an Ethernet network, but early next year the
company plans to roll out a Windows 95 version. (Investor's Business Daily
24 Dec 96 A5)

NETSCAPE'S COMMUNICATOR IS LATEST WORD IN
BROWSER BATTLES

Netscape Communications has beat Microsoft by several months in releasing
the test version of its updated   Communicator browser software.
Communicator includes more sophisticated e-mail and groupware
capabilities, and is designed to compete with Microsoft's Exchange and
BackOffice programs and IBM's Lotus Notes. Microsoft will respond in the
next few months with a new version of Explorer that incorporates
technology that allows users to broadcast information to the desktop.
Netscape's Constellation software will be added to its Communicator
browser in the next three months, giving it similar capabilities.
(Investor's Business Daily 23 Dec 96 A7)

FCC TO STUDY ACCESS CHARGES

The Federal Communications Commission will be inviting public and industry
comment on optional charging plans that reimburse local phone carriers for
handling the beginning and ending of long-distance: the so- called
"access" fees. The local companies are promoting an option that would rely
on competition to reduce the fees, whereas the long-distance carriers want
the FCC to order cuts in the charges over a specific period.   The local
phone service providers collect a total of $23 billion a year, some part of
which is used to subsidize service in hard-to-service areas and to provide
service to low-income customers. (Atlanta Journal- Constitution 24 Dec 96
F8)
(Editor Note) Late 12/24/96 the FCC ruled against access fees.

HOW CAN A NICHE BE BEFORE IT DISAPPEARS?

"Niche" cable networks (offering programs to special interests, such as jazz, ecology, Afro-Caribbean culture, etc.) are finding it increasingly difficult to be transmitted by the approximately 11,000 cable systems in the U.S., because economic forces inevitably favor broad-concept programming over specialized programming, and the niche networks are having to compete with much larger players. Industry analyst Marc Riely says: "If you don't have the equity interest of a larger operator, or you aren't backed by a media company like Disney or Time Warner, you'll have a really tough time getting launched." (New York Times 23 Dec 96 C7)

SHARE CUSTOMER DATA? JUNO HASN'T, DOESN'T, & WON'T

Subscribers to Juno Online Services get free e-mail service in exchange for having small, unobtrusive graphical ads attached to their mail and for filling out a personal profile so that the company can target its ads accurately; however, the New York attorney general's office noticed a discrepancy between Juno's Web site (which said it would not sell or distribute any of the information to outside businesses) and the actual agreement (which gave the company the right to sell or exchange user profiles). Juno's president immediately clarified the policy and promised not to distribute any personal information to third parties: "We didn't anticipate doing it, didn't intend to do it and didn't do it."   (Newsday 11 Dec 96 A51)

WHAT'S NEXT FOR CURRENT MAC OWNERS?

Following Apple's purchase of Next, Apple and Next executives are working hard to assure Macintosh buyers that the new operating system will work with current Macintosh systems but have not made such assurances to owners of older-model Macs. Apple chief technology officer Ellen Hancock says the new operating system will initially only run on ''currently shipping'' Macs that use the PowerPC processor. Older Macintoshes, based on the earlier 68000 processor, and possibly early PowerPC models, may be orphaned. (San Jose Mercury News Center 24 Dec 96)

NOTES FROM THE CULTURE WARS

As previously reported (Edupage 5 Dec 96), Georgia Tech Lorraine, the European platform of the Georgia Institute of Technology, is being sued in France for having its home page presented only in English and not in French. In France, the law requires that goods and services be offered in French in addition to any other languages in which the offer is made. Marc Bonnaut, the administrator of the French-defense association bringing the suit, says that the use of English and other foreign languages on the Net is not the real issue, and that whether a site "is in English, Chinese or Russian is no problem. The problem is that it is not also in French. We are not against English, we are for the French language. We are in France, after all." Under a 1994 law, such public communications as advertising and restaurant menus must be in French, and if they are also translated it must be into more than one language, to prevent France from becoming a bilingual country. The director of Georgia Tech Lorraine says in protest: "The curriculum is the curriculum of an American university; the students are all Georgia Tech students." M. Bonnaut says: "If there is a German cafe in Paris and only Germans come to it, the cafe still has to have a French-language menu." (Washington Post 24 Dec 96 A1)

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or a chime; or a glockenspiel. Your choice. But ring it!

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not, substitute your own name).

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE
The CAUSE organization's annual conference on information technology in
higher education is scheduled for the end of this month in New Orleans.
The conference will bring together administrators, academicians and other
managers of information resources. For full conference information check
out   <http://cause-www.colorado.edu   >   or   send   e-mail   to
conf@cause.colorado.edu.

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Shareware Focus STR Feature   Presenting the Latest Goodies

                      Shareware Treasure Chest

By Lloyd E. Pulley

     Did you get a new computer, or hardware upgrades for your old
computer, for Christmas? If so, then this week's column probably has
something of interest for you. It's a little larger than normal because
I've made sure to put in a little bit of everything - including a bunch of
new shareware games and demos. Most of the commercial demos will give you
a good idea of what the game is about, with many being fully working - up
until a certain level. But most are very large (one is 14 meg), so make
sure you have plenty of hard drive space and time (for downloading). Also,
most now require at least a Pentium to run.

     I've added a new 'UPGRADE' feature to the column. If a file that I've
recently listed in the last week or so has been upgraded (which happens, a

bug might have popped up), I'll just note it so at the front of the
description and only include a small description of the file. If you need
a more detailed description of the file, the UPGRADE notice will state
which version of STR the original is located. The UPGRADE's will be at the
end of the column.

Name/Version   Release Date   Size Price

Multimedia Xplorer - 1.0.1   12/26/96 670k Shareware
$20.00

   This new handy image/multimedia application allows you to view/convert
JPEG, GIF, PNG, TIFF, BMP, WMF, PCX, ICO images; play WAV, MID, RMI, AIFF,
AU, SND sounds and AVI, MPEG, MOV videos; extract icons from ICO, ICL, DLL,
EXE files. Some more keywords: QuickPicker for most used directories;
Destinations for coping/moving files; file filters; set centered or tiled
wallpaper; view images as tiled wallpaper/web page background;
view/edit/save slide shows; Multimedia Detective file finder; click'n'view
interface; easy; powerful; manage files; drag files from Explorer.

    Download Site - http://www.estpak.ee/~ahto/moon/index.html

Name/Version   Release Date   Size Price

MS Internet Mail and Newsreader 1.0 for Win95   12/20/96 1.1mb
Freeware

 Faster than using a pencil, and easier than licking a stamp.

There's simply no easier way to send and read electronic mail and news than
with Microsoft Internet Mail and News. Our new SMTP/POP3 mail client
enables you to work online or offline, send and read HTML formatted
messages, sort and store mail any way you like, and view messages quickly
in a preview pane. Our new newsreader enables you to connect to multiple
news servers, decodes binary files, and supports the same preview pane as
our mail client. Frustrated with hard-to-use e-mail and newsreader
software? Try Microsoft Internet Mail and News, and start communicating
with ease. (Internet Mail and News is currently available for Windows 95,
Windows NT 4.0, and Macintosh and requires Internet Explorer 3.0).

    Download Site - http://www.microsoft.com/ie/ie3/imn.htm

Name/Version   Release Date   Size Price

IChat for MS Internet Explorer - 2.2   12/23/96 1059k
Freeware
IChat for Netscape - 2.2   12/23/96 1181k   Freeware

   The ichat Plug-in for Internet Explorer (or Netscape) is a software
plugin for user's of the IE browser that allows you to connect to IRC and
ichat chat servers around the world - all from within the IE environment!
When users visit a web site with ichat, the browser displays both the
site's content and a real-time, on-going chat session with site
representatives and visitors. Communication is intuitive. Visitors enter
a conversation simply by typing without any need to install or learn
entirely new applications. If you can use a web browser, you can chat with

ichat.

   Download Site - http://www.ichat.com/

Name/Version   Release Date   Size Price

Numerology Star Reader - 4.0   ???   656k
Shareware $10

   Ancient Prophecies.. Stars.. Numerological Readings.. Astrological
Readings.. Dream Interpretation.   Finally you can unlock all the secrets
to your past, present and future! Numerology Star Reader 4.0 was designed
to give you, the user, the ability to read your Numerological and
Astrological predictions for any day in any given year as well as to
interpret over 1000 dreams! Mystical and magical qualities have been
ascribed to numbers, stars and dreams both in antiquity and in modern
times. Numerology Star Reader 4.0 will interpret this world for you!
Version 4.0 requires Windows 95 or Windows NT 3.51 or later.

Note: The unregistered version will not give any readings (to protect the
author). By registering the program, you will then be able to use the
program to its fullest and also remove any registration reminders.

   Download Site - http://www2.pitnet.net/numer/numer.html

Name/Version   Release Date   Size Price

Netscape Communicator - 4.0 Beta 1   12/21/96 6.6mb   Commercial
Demo

 Netscape Communicator is an open email, groupware, and browser suite that
provides the complete set of tools you need every day to easily
communicate, share, and access information on your intranet or the
Internet. It integrates open email, groupware, editing, and browsing tools
into one powerful yet easy-to-use application. Communicate using Netscape
Messenger and Netscape Navigator. Create documents using Netscape Composer.
Collaborate using Netscape Collabra and Netscape Conference. However you
need or want to communicate, Netscape Communicator helps you do it with
ease.

   Download Site -
http://home.netscape.com/comprod/products/communicator/index.html

Name/Version   Release Date   Size Price

Budget Maker - 2.0   11/13/96 1.4mb   Shareware

   Budget Maker is a very easy way to create a personal home budget--NOT
another checkbook manager. How much should you save from each paycheck to
make sure you have funds on hand to pay your bills? How much additional
debt can you afford? How do you figure these things when you have more than
one source of income? Can you pay a little extra on your home mortgage, and
will it be worth the trouble? (You might be surprised to find out.) Budget
Maker takes only minutes to answer these questions, and while online help
and a users guide are included, you probably won't need them to get
started. (After installation, check out the sample budget file and you'll
see right away how it works.) Easy to set up, easy to change. But just

because it's easy doesn't mean it isn't highly effective! Budget Maker lays
out a solid, common-sense financial strategy that you don't need to be an
accountant to understand.

You will need to have VB40016.DLL installed in your \Windows\System
directory before installing Budget Maker.

    Download Site - http://members.aol.com/budmkr/index.html

Name/Version   Release Date   Size Price

WinZip Netscape Helper 32-bit beta 2   12/20/96 127k Freeware

 For Netscape users - If you've ever tried using WinZip as a Netscape
Helper (via Netscape's Options -> General Preferences -> Helpers dialog
box) you probably noticed that when you close Netscape, it deletes all the
Zip files you downloaded. Just download and run this free helper and all
your archives will be automatically moved out of your temporary directory
to safety in a location of your choice. Two versions available, one for
Windows95/NT4.0 and one for Windows 3.1

    Download Site - http://www.winzip.com/betanh.htm

Name/Version   Release Date   Size Price

WinDates - v2.01   12/22/96 425k Shareware $15

  "NEVER MISS MOTHER'S DAY OR A BIRTHDAY AGAIN!!" WinDates is reminder
program that allows you to enter important dates and times to remember
during the year. By installing the WinDates icon in your "Startup" program
group, WinDates will remind you of events each time you start Windows.
Holiday, Birthday, Event reminder with alarms & calendar for Windows 95/NT.
Supports one-time, monthly and yearly events as well as custom events such
as last Sunday in May. Calculates age on birthdays. AUTOMATICALLY
calculates and reminds you of almost 40 holidays like Easter and Mother's
Day.

    Download Site - http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/rockinsoftware

Name/Version   Release Date   Size Price

Peeper 32-bit - 2.1.7   12/20/96 2mb Shareware
- $27.95
                                                           + $3.00 s/h

   PEEPER 32 is a multiple document file viewer. This means you can display
up to nine different files at the same time. It is capable of Viewing over
30 file formats including JPG, ASCII, HEX, PCX, TIF, BMP, WMF, ICON, MS
Word, WordPerfect, AMI PRO, xBase, Paradox, Lotus, XL, ZIP, LZH, Quattro
Pro, MetaFiles, Q&A, Windows Write, and Microsoft Works. Extract Version
identification info from Windows DLLs, EXEs, and other Windows file types.
File contents can be marked and copied to the Windows Clipboard.

Other features include File Management features such as COPY, MOVE, DELETE,
RENAME.

Peeper 32 requires Windows 95 or above.

Download Site - http://www.fineware.com/peep32a.shtml

Name/Version   Release Date   Size Price

ZipFolders - 2.02   12/21/96 798k Shareware
$24.00

 ZipFolders provides a easy way to handle Zip files under Windows and DOS.
You can run any program, game and installation program directly from within
a ZIP file. No need to decompress any file to a temporary location first,
run every file right out of its ZIP file and keep it in the ZIP file to
save precious disk space.

    Download Site - http://www.mijenix.com/

Name/Version   Release Date   Size Price

OnLive Talker 32-bit - 1.0 plug-in   12/20/96 2.7mb   Free
beta

 Talker lets users have group conversations on any web page, enhancing the
greatest wealth of information in the world by adding socialization.
Talker takes current text chat and person-to-person voice products to the
next level by allowing people to socialize around the millions of existing
topics on the Web in their own voices. As a plug-in to Netscape Navigator
or Internet Explorer, people just go to their favorite OnLive! enabled web
site and can join conversations with users from around the world who share
that interest while viewing the same web content. All you need is a
multimedia Pentium and a basic 14.4 modem connection to the Internet.

    Download Site - http://www.onlive.com/talker/

Name/Version   Release Date   Size Price

XDesktop - 1.0   12/18/96 961k Shareware $10.00

  The ultimate desktop wallpaper changer. Support BMP, JPG, PCX, GIF, TGA,
DIB, RLE format images. It can automatically changer wallpaper by the
style center/tile/fit to screen/rule for you. Various change sequence: up
to down, down to up, random. Support multi set (like 'theme' in MS PLUS!)
and each set can have its own properties. Remove wallpaper, drag&drop and
much more.

    Download Site - http://www.cs.nthu.edu.tw/~br831529/

Name/Version   Release Date   Size Price

J-Write - 2.2c   12/20/96 495k Shareware
$20.00

 The J-Write Text Editor is a powerful Windows text editor, designed from
the beginning to handle very large text files. Regardless of size, you will
find that J-Write will open a file containing megabytes of text as quickly
as a file containing only a few lines. Even after editing the text, file
saving is as fast as your disk will stream data. J-Write has full keyboard

and mouse support, multi-level undo/redo, four word wrap modes including
WYSIWYG, support for uuencode/decode, EMail Reformating, any ANSI font,
zoom, plus many other useful text editing features.

   Download Site - http://www.demon.co.uk/mwa-soft/

Name/Version	Release Date	Size Price
Scytale - 1.4e	12/21/96	560k Freeware

   Terrific front end for using PGP. All the commands you need are here in
a handy Windows version. This version has many new features added. To
save keystrokes, the program now remembers some of the last input you
provided such as who to encrypt to, your password can be remembered to save
retyping, and there is a macro facility to make it really automatic when
you use it with any program that will accept macro commands. With this
macro feature the program action takes place without even bringing the
program menu up, and then shuts itself down automatically after completion.
This makes for a very seamless interface to such things as mail programs.
The key management features are terrific and you really don't need to know
how to work the DOS based PGP program at all. Note: Requires you already
have PGP installed.

   Download Site - http://www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/Heights/5428/

Name/Version	Release Date	Size Price
Internet Agents 32-bit - 1.0 beta 0.9.2c	12/21/96	5.6mb Shareware $49.95

 Agents created by Internet Agents can carry out a large variety of tasks,
such as: sending, receiving, and sorting mail; searches; downloading Web
sites; updating Web pages; and managing discussion groups. Agents can be
programmed to work for you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week - leaving you free
to do what you want. An Internet Agents agent can outperform humans in
output as well as in versatility: *Meta Finder can submit a request to
several search engines simultaneously, handle the results, and extract all
pertinent Web pages *Grabber downloads a site to your computer *News
Grabber regularly grabs news according to your fields of interest *Mail
Merger sends personalized mail to an unlimited number of recipients by
effecting a merge with a database *Mail Reader regularly picks up your e-
mail and many other tasks are optional.

   Download Site - http://www.agents-tech.com/

Name/Version	Release Date	Size Price
Goldwave - 3.22	12/21/96	465k Shareware $30

   GoldWave is a digital audio editor for Microsoft Windows. It features
realtime amplitude, spectrum, and spectrogram oscilloscopes, intelligent
large file editing, numerous effects, and support for a wide variety of
sound formats. GoldWave can open and play .au files found in Java
applications and on Web pages. It can convert to and from many sound
formats including .wav, .voc, .afc, .au, and binary data. Special effects
such as Doppler, distortion, echo, flange, and transpose can alter and
enhance your audio files to create new and unique sounds. GoldWave is

ideal for people who need to work with audio for Java applications, Web
pages, games, radio/TV, or just for fun.

   Download Site - http://web.cs.mun.ca/~chris3/goldwave

Name/Version   Release Date   Size Price

TPS Bud - 1.0   ???   482k Shareware $7

   Keep track of your Expenses/Income with TPSBUD. Spreadsheet type Grid.
Up to 45 monthly expenses and 5 monthly Incomes. Now you will be able to
watch every penny you spend or earn. If you are looking for a simple, easy
to use, personal, monthly budget program, this is it! TPS Bud keeps track
of your monthly expenses and income from January to December. The program
uses a spreadsheet format with up to 45 entrees for monthly expenses and 5
entrees for monthly incomes per each file you create. The program
automatically adds and subtracts all columns, keeping monthly and annual
totals for each expense and income category. Data is added by using the
accompanying calculator screen or your keyboard. Changing any entrees is
simple and easy. Hence, all category totals are updated with each change.

   Download Site - http://www.bestzips.com/html/11510/tpsbud.htm

Name/Version   Release Date   Size Price

QuikLink Explorer 32-bit - 3.0 beta 4   12/22/96 2.3mb
Shareware $10

   QuikLink Explorer is a replacement system for your Netscape Bookmark,
Mosaic Hotlist, and Internet Explorer Favorites files. Working with the
more popular web browsers, QuikLink Explorer takes you where you want to go
with the click of a button. No longer do you need to maintain seperate
lists of your favorite sites for each browser you use. You can also use
QuikLink Explorer to convert your lists between browser formats or turn
them into web pages. The easy to use interface, similar to the Windows95
Explorer, makes web surfing fast and efficient, saving you time and money.

   Download Site - http://www.quiklinks.com/

Name/Version   Release Date   Size Price

Szipw 32-bit - 4.0   12/22/96 400k Shareware

   Super Zip is the Ultimate Zip file manager for Windows. It supports
command line parameters, Creates and manages backup sets for easy backup
operations , makes Zip archives with long filenames.View Zip files like
Disks with a directory tree, Internal Zip/Unzip. Easy configuration. Easy
edit of Zip comments and file comments. Accepts command line parameters
like PKZIP. Internal File viewer, updates zip file when contents changed.
Support Files and dirs dropped from windows file manager, Add files using a
list of path/wildcards, very usefull when files to compress are in
different locations. Recompression of archives using different
password.compression level. Spanned Disks (multiple diskettes),
Hidden/System files, Volume labels, full PKzip 2.0 Encryption
supported.Support for Self Extractable archives. Allow renaming, changing
file date/time, Moving to another dir (using drag/drop), of the files and
directories within the archive. Internal Zip repair functions.

Download Site - http://www.voicenet.com/~jank/astec/szipw.htm

Name/Version   Release Date   Size Price

Kalkulator 32-bit   12/19/96 493k Shareware $
40.00
Midget 32-bit   12/19/96 221k Shareware $
10.00

 Kalkulator is a powerful yet simple to use calculator and numerical Swiss
army knife for Windows 3.1 or 95, with features making it especially
suitable for scientific and engineering users, including students of these
disciplines.

If you think Kalkulator is an overkill for your needs, there is a smaller
and simpler alternative: Midget. Midget is a calculator, the "Kalkulator
for the Rest of Us". It provides most of the everyday capabilities of its
more advanced sibling in a smaller, simpler (and cheaper!) package.

Kalkulator does not create any files outside of its folder, so trying it
out is simple: just unzip it into a new folder and run - if you decide the
program is not for you, delete the whole folder and forget about it.

    Download Site - http://www.freeflight.com/wrotniak/kalkul.html

Name/Version   Release Date   Size Price

Kith and Kin - 3.02   January - 96   404k Shareware
$48

 An excellent genealogy/family-tree program. Create a visual tree with
detailed information in this searchable database. Include pictures,
sounds, maps, and more.

    Download Site - http://www.galttech.com/educ.shtml

Name/Version   Release Date   Size Price

Cosmo Player 32-bit - 1.0 beta 3   12/24/96 2.5mb   Free
Beta

 Cosmo Player is the first browser to support VRML 2.0, the industry
standard for 3D worlds on the Web with sensors, scripts and sound. To
boost your way through the infoverse, Cosmo Player has plenty of Silicon
Graphics visual simulation technology packed into it's engine room. Now
you can experience vast 3D universes on your PC without getting bogged
down. It has Spatial audio for presence in the virtual world, Embedded
audio and video to enliven the virtual world, and Constant frame rates for
smooth interaction with large worlds.

    Download Site - http://webspace.sgi.com/cosmoplayer/

Name/Version   Release Date   Size Price

VoiceBrowser for Win95   12/24/96 4.4mb   Shareware

$12.95

 This exciting new product enhances the most popular Internet access
software such as Netscape Navigator, Internet Explorer and Spyglass Mosaic
by enabling users to navigate to popular websites via speech, as well as to
command and control the many advanced functions of browsers. Internet
navigation, terms and technology can be very confusing to new users, even
the most sophisticated. Using conversational speech as a way to
communicate with the browser software makes the experience easier and more
fun. Users can navigate to their favorite sites, navigate within those
sites and explore new ones. VoiceBrowser has pre-programmed 50 of the most
popular WWW sites and also allows users to add new websites simply, as they
surf the Net. The system comes with "voice folders", which enable the user
to organize their favorite web sites by categories such as finance,
education, sports, computers, shopping, entertainment, news, food, travel
and then access them by voice commands.

    Download Site - http://www.verbex.com/browser.htm

- Fully functional Sega game demos for the PC

Name   Size

Sega Rally   14.30mb
Virtua Fighter   2,848k
Virtua Squad   6,141k
Daytona USA   5,068k
Comix Zone   1,643k
BUG!   3,668k
Baku Baku   895k
Sonic CD   5,134k

All demos require a Pentium PC (60mhz or better) with at least 8MB of RAM,
an SVGA monitor and a Soundblaster compatible sound card. You also need
DirectX. Save the file to disk, run the file and you are ready to go!

    Download Site - Download Site - http://www.sega.com/

Name/Version   Release Date   Size Price

Heroes of Might and Magic 2   12/20/96   27mb Commercial Demo

 Having crushed his enemies, consolidated his power base and eliminated
dissent at the end of Heroes of Might and Magic, Lord Ironfist settled down
to rule the land of Enroth. After 25 years of peace, the land is again
thrust into turmoil. Lord Ironfist is dead and the ensuing struggle for
power between his sons, Archibald and Roland, has led to a state of civil
war. Players must choose sides and gather their armies as they use all of
their strategic wit and tactics to join in the battle for domination of the
lands. Win95 only.

    Download Site - http://www.nwcomputing.com/

Name/Version   Release Date   Size Price

Canasta - 4.02   12/25/96 1.3mb   Shareware
$19.95

Strategy cardgame played against the computer -using artificial
intelligence- or another person over a network or the Internet. The player
wins by melding cards and by making canastas. A canasta is a column of
seven cards (i.e. seven Kings). Help file with explanation of all rules is
included. Canasta for Windows supports multiple resolutions up to
1280x1024 and includes sound & music support, highscores, unlimited undo,
adjustable rules and three skill levels (Beginner, Advanced and Expert).

   Download Site - http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/mharte/

Name/Version   Release Date   Size Price

Blast Chamber   12/26/96 5mb Commercial Demo

   Welcome to The Blast Chamber. Your challenge is simple: survive the
game! Before entering the chamber you should familiarize yourself with the
competition and the chamber itself. Your efforts will determine whether
you succeed and are rewarded with fame and glory - or fail in a flaming
burst of C4.

Note: Requires a Pentium PC (60mhz or better) with at least 8MB of RAM and
an SVGA monitor.

   Download Site - http://www.activision.com/blastchamber/index2.html

Name/Version   Release Date   Size Price

Eat My Dust for Win95   12/21/96 4.3mb   Shareware

   Park your ego behind the wheel for pulse-pounding, 3-D road racing like
you've never experienced! Outrageous cars, crazy characters, wicked
driving conditions, and low-down, dirty tricks are the rules of the road.
So gear up and get ready to outsmart your opponent in a mind-blowing,
adrenaline-rushing road race. It features: *4 racing environments
including Alien Asteroid, Bleach Bone Gulch, Country Challenge and Super
Speedway *Choice of 5 turbo charged vehicles and 6 hysterical drivers and
more. Note: For Windows 95 only.

   Download Site - http://www.eatmydust.com/

Name/Version   Release Date   Size Price

Surface Tension   12/20/96 15mb Commercial Demo

   Battle the Forces of Corporate Greed Teleport Across the Galaxy and Blow
a few Corporate Suits into Cosmic Slime. PMA, a deadly airborne desease,
is infecting the Earth's population at an astronomical rate. Glomavine, the
only vaccine, is six weeks away somewhere in our Solar System; it cannot
survive the journey. LYNX megacorp has the only known Glomavine mine AND
owns all the freighters in the system. Dr. Rawlwin has invented
Teleportation, but LYNX does not wish to lose revenue as a result of the
doctor's find. You are charged with the mission of teleporting to
planetoids in our system to find the Glomavine mine, and to overthrow any
LYNX camps you may find. DOS based game.

   Download Site -

http://www.gametek.com/webfinall/coming_soon/surface/surface.html

Name/Version   Release Date   Size Price

EditPad 32-bit 1.2.2   12/16/96   210k
Postcardware

UPDATE (STR1251) -   EditPad is a replacement for the standard Windows
NotePad. EditPad requires Windows 95 or later to run. No additional DLLs
or whatever are required.

    Download Site - http://www.tornado.be/~johnfg/jgsoft.html

Name/Version   Release Date   Size Price

Pegasus E-Mail 32-bit - 2.51   12/24/96   1.5mb
Freeware

UPDATE (STR1251) -   Pegasus Mail is an electronic mail system for use with
Novell NetWare and on stand alone systems using the WINSOCK TCP/IP
interface. It is a full-fledged mailer, with a lot of nice features like a
spell checker, mailing list support, and much more

    Download Site - http://www.pegasus.usa.com

Name/Version   Release Date   Size Price

December '96 definition update for Mcafee   12/20/96   365k
Freeware

UPDATE (STR1251) - The December virus update for users of McAfee's anti-
virus products. This file is a complete replacement for any previous
definitions set for all of the Mcafee products. Usable by: WebScan (the
antivirus helper app), NetShield, VShield, and VirusScan for DOS,, or
Windows (3.x, 95, or NT).

    Download Site - http://www.mcafee.com

                                ****

Kids Computing Corner
Frank Sereno, Editor

                    The Kids' Computing Corner
                  Computer news and software reviews
                    from a parent's point of view

Before we get into the reviews this week, there is supposed to be a picture

included this week of my nephew, Jason. To the best of my knowledge, Jason
is the youngest writer on the staff. He would welcome e-mail from fellow
teen computer enthusiasts. His e-mail address is jason.sereno@mules-
ear.com

Hopefully he will be a regular contributor and will review games as well as
educational software. I think it is important that adults recognize how
teens feel about the educational and entertainment software that is being
offered to them today.

I personally hope that everyone had a very merry Christmas. The New Year
is right around the corner so don't forget to make those resolutions. I'm
hoping to be a bit more patient this year along with staying on my low-fat
diet. The cholesterol got up to around 230 which is a wee bit above the
optimum level. So far I have no signs of heart disease (I ran the
treadmill for the stress test on Monday), but I have to make the changes
that will keep me around for several more decades.

Be sure that if you go out celebrating on New Year's Eve that you have a
designated driver if you will be partaking of alcoholic beverages. And be
sure to watch out for the other guy. Everyone's judgment is not as good as
yours, so be sure to drive defensively. This magazine's staff hopes that
you will all be around to enjoy life and our prose for many years to come.
--Frank

                New Sierra Promotion Features Trek BMX Bikes

To promote their latest installment in the Dr. Brain series, The Time Warp
of Dr. Brain, Sierra is offering 115 Trek SubDude BMX bikes to lucky
contestants. Entries will be accepted from January 18 through February 16,
1997.

You can learn more about the Dr. Brain Time Trek at Computer City outlets
or on the World Wide Web at http://www.sierra.com/drbrain4. No purchase is
necessary but entrants must be at least 18 years old. Entry forms can be
filled out at Computer City or you can enter by mail by sending your name,
address and phone number to Dr. Brain's Time Trek Sweepstakes, Sierra On-
Line, 3380 146th Place SE, Bellevue, WA 98007.

The Time Warp of Dr. Brain is the fourth installment of the Dr. Brain
series. This newest title features over 600 puzzles, 3D graphics and
animation, and a new soundtrack. Journey through time to give your mind
the most exercise it has had in years. You'll be amazed! You'll be
stumped!

                    Guinness Multimedia Disc of Records
                            Windows CD-ROM
                             ages 6 and up
                        street price around $30

                          Grolier Interactive
                           Danbury CT 06816
                             203-797-3530
                         http://www.grolier.com

                         Program Requirements
                           OS: Windows 3.1
                           CPU: 486DX-33
                           HD Space: 6 MB
                           Memory: 4 MB

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                         Graphics:    640 x 480, 256 colors
                         CD-ROM:  Double-speed
                         Audio:       Windows-compatible sound card
                         Other:          mouse, printer optional
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review by Frank Sereno

If you have been a fan of the Guinness Book of World Records, then this
electronic edition from Grolier Interactive will delight you. This
multimedia offering is a collection of the most eclectic records set by man
and beast.

The program is easy to use and navigates a lot like a web browser. You can
search for records with Boolean logic or search through the topics
manually. You can look at many records with picture or QuickTime movies.
Another feature is a random slideshow that picks records with pictures to
display. The program even has a trivia game that you can use to test your
knowledge of minutiae.

No matter how you use this program, the amazing facts and trivia contained
within will fascinate you. Would you believe that a town in Britain
combined to knit a scarf that was over 20 miles long? Or how about the
fact that world's longest banana split measured over 4.5 miles in length?
If you enjoy trivia and fascinating facts, Guinness Multimedia Disc of
Records is the CD-ROM to get.

                    Practice Makes Perfect Spanish
                       Windows/Mac hybrid CD-ROM
                            ages 9 and up
                        street price around $40

                        The Learning Company
                          6493 Kaiser Drive
                          Fremont CA 94555
                          1-800-852-2255
                        http://www.softkey.com

                        Program Requirements
       IBM   Macintosh
OS: Windows 3.1, Windows 95   OS: System 7.1
CPU: 386DX/33   CPU: 68030/33
HD Space: 1 MB   HD Space:
1 MB
Memory: 8 MB   Memory: 4 MB
Graphics: 640 by 480 with 256 colors   Graphics:
256 colors, 13" monitor
CD-ROM: Double-speed   CD-ROM: Double-speed
Audio: 8-bit Windows compatible sound card
Other: mouse, microphone optional   Other:
MacRecorder or microphone

review by Jason Sereno

Recently, I received the programs Practice Makes Perfect Spanish and Think
and Talk Spanish from The Learning Company. They both use The Learning
```

Company's Speech Recognition Technology.  This technology gives you an
example and you are to repeat it into a microphone.  The computer will then
play back what you said and rate you anywhere from a tourist to native.

Practice Makes Perfect Spanish contains over 2,300 linked words, photos,
and recordings of  Spanish words.  The program tries to make things fun by
offering many ways to learn new words.  It contains many pictures with four
or five vocabulary words in each.

Although I found this program helpful, the program is designed to build a
person's Spanish vocabulary skills and develop correct pronunciation.
There are other programs developed by The Learning Company that deal with
verb conjugation, reading and writing, and grammar.  In other words, don't
plan on forming sentences or actually being  able to communicate with
another person in Spanish until you have bought one of The Learning
Company's complete courses.  I believe that this program's target is the 9-
15 year old group of kids because of its simplicity and very basic, yet fun
teaching style.  It is a good choice to buy if you have a child or if you
would like to start learning basic Spanish.


                    Berlitz Think & Talk Spanish
                     Windows/Mac hybrid CD-ROM
                          ages 9 and up
                      street price about $90
                       The Learning Company


                      Program Requirements
      IBM                                    Macintosh
OS:        Windows 3.1, Windows 95          OS:            System 7.1
CPU:           486DX/33                      CPU:           68040/25
HD Space:     1 MB                                          HD Space:
1 MB
Memory:        8 MB                          Memory:        4 MB
Graphics:      640 by 480 with 256 colors                  Graphics:
256 colors, 13" monitor
CD-ROM:    Double-speed                      CD-ROM:    Double-speed
Audio:         8-bit Windows compatible sound card
Other:         mouse, microphone optional              Other:
MacRecorder or microphone opt.

review by Jason Sereno


The Learning Company's Berlitz Think and Talk Spanish also contains many
words and pictures.  Unlike Practice Makes Perfect Spanish, all pictures in
Think and Talk Spanish are animated.  Although this may appeal to kids, I
believe that this program is too advanced for smaller children and should
probably be used by ages 13 and up.

One incredibly useful piece of equipment is the Think and Talk Spanish
Dictionary.  It provides over 10,000 words in Spanish or English  This is
very convenient for finding specific words.  This program uses a different
technique than Practice Makes Perfect Spanish.  Unlike Practice Makes
Perfect Spanish, you see the words you are going to learn in a short skit
with video and audio.  You can listen and repeat using the Speech
Recognition Technology as much as you want until you feel comfortable and
you feel you know the words.

I find this program's repetitive and similarly animated figures and static scenery make this program quickly tiring and frequently boring.  There is little English used in this program so it is very easy to get confused. Even though this program is a rather repetitive and sometimes boring, it is a complete course in comparison to Practice Makes Perfect Spanish.  Think and Talk includes verb conjugation, concentrates on grammar, and focuses on reading and writing also.  If you really want to learn and understand Spanish and don't mind that this program is lacking in entertainment value, then Berlitz Think and Talk Spanish would be a good buy for you or your family.


                             Amazing Math
                 Hybrid CD-ROM for Windows and Macintosh
                           for ages 8 to 12
                        street price around $30


                       Brighter Child Interactive
                       150 East Wilson Bridge Road
                              Suite 150
                          Columbus OH 43085
                            614-847-8118
                       http://www.brighterchild.com


                          Program Requirements
      IBM                                    Macintosh
OS:        Windows 3.1, Windows 95           OS:          System 7.1
CPU:          486DX/66                       CPU:          68040
HD Space:     25 MB                                       HD Space:      25MB
recommended
Memory:       8 MB                           Memory:       8 MB
Graphics:     640 by 480 with 256 colors                  Graphics:
256 colors, 13" monitor
CD-ROM:    Double-speed                      CD-ROM:    Double-speed
Audio:        8-bit Windows compatible sound card
Other:        mouse


review by Frank Sereno


Amazing Math is an educational program that consists of four arcade games featuring four of Marvel Comics' super heroes.  Spider-Man, Wolverine, She-Hulk and Iron Man are the on-screen protagonists as your child solves math problems and battles the minions of evil.  The games feature better than average graphics and an excellent sound track.

The games cover four different types of math problems.  The Spider-Man vs. The Hobgoblin game requires solving basic math equations such as addition, subtraction, multiplication and division.  Wolverine in the Danger Room teaches children how to read graphs.  She-Hulk vs. The Toad Men encourages understanding of factoring and multiples.  The final game is Iron Man vs. Modok.  Children will learn basic geometric shapes and angles in this activity.

Each game has three levels of difficulty.  To be honest, I don't believe most eight-year-olds will be able to finish any of these activities even on the lowest level.  Not only are the math problems aimed for older students, but the pressure of figuring out an answer plus playing the arcade game may require more coordination and concentration than younger students can muster.  All games involve using the cursor keys for character movement and

using the mouse to aim and fire projectiles.  An option for using a gamepad
or joystick would be a great addition to this software.


Spider-Man vs. The Hobgoblin owes its design to several games from the
past.  I can see similarities to Squish'em and Kaboom.  The Hobgoblin has
taken over a skyscraper and Spider-Man must climb to top to battle his
nemesis.  As he climbs, he must answer basic math equations that appear in
the building's windows. The answers are on pumpkins that Hobgoblin is
throwing from the roof.  He must catch the pumpkins with the correct answer
with his web-slinger and then throw it at the equation.  If a pumpkin hits
Spidey or if he answers a problem incorrectly, he loses energy.  If
Spidey's energy runs out, then Hobgoblin wins.  However, you can replenish
his energy by grabbing the spiders that appear in some windows.  Once you
reach the roof, you must not only answer the equations, but you must hit
Hobgoblin as some sort of hooverboard over Spidey's head.  My kids really
enjoyed watching me do the research on this part of the program!

Wolverine in the Danger Room is the only game that you cannot lose while
playing the arcade part of this collection.  Wolverine's task is to slash
colored helmets that are projected into the room, but he also must avoid
fireballs, bombs, electrodes and lasers.  Then a graph is made from the
action in the room and the player will answer questions pertaining to the
graph.  You really have to read the questions carefully or you'll give an
incorrect answer.  This game was the least fun of the four to me.

She-Hulk vs. The Toad Men is a wild shooting game.  She-Hulk is driving her
flying Cadillac in the night sky when the Toad Men decide to invade Earth.
The Toad Men are all wearing numbers that are factors, multiples or
equivalent fractions of numbers on She-Hulk's dashboard.  The player must
choose the right ammo to shoot the Toad Men.  If you use the wrong ammo,
the Toad Men attack and take away the car's energy.  Lose all your energy
and it's game over!  To make the game even harder, in higher levels the
numbers will change on the Toad Men during their attack.  In a split second
you go from having the right ammunition to the wrong.  This game is very
fast-paced and I wouldn't recommend it for most eight- or nine-year-olds.

Iron Man vs. Modok owes its play design to Asteroids.  Iron Man is in space
trying to destroy rogue satellites.  But while he is trying to do this
task, he must avoid being hit by large asteroids and meteors or he will
lose energy.  Hitting the wrong target will sap his energy supplies as
well.  The cursor keys activate his rocket pack, but this depletes his
energy also.  Occasionally a satellite with a power-up or energy will float
by.  In this game your targets are geometric shapes.  The trick is that the
images will change as the satellites move about the screen.  You might fire
a shot while a satellite is a legitimate target only to have it be the
wrong type when your projectile hits it.  This game is fun and challenging,
but it does take a while to get used to the play controls.

The program's interface is easy to use.  It would have been better if the
"Easy Teach" lessons were narrated rather than just text and graphics.  I
do have a complaint about the program's requirements.  Though the box and
other documentation say the program can run with less than 25 megs of hard
drive real estate, you aren't given any options during an install in
Windows 95.  It gobbled up 26 megs each time I installed it on my system.
The program does support Win95's autoplay and uninstall features.  I would
say that this program would probably be better for ages 10 to 12 rather
than 8 to 12.

A lot of programs out there have more intensive math content, but if they

aren't fun then kids won't learn from them.  You could put a math textbook on a CD-ROM, but it would be worthless if children never accessed it. You might want to check out this program before purchasing because I could find no mentions of "satisfaction guaranteed" on the box or in the documentation.  However, this program is reasonably priced and it is a lot of fun.  I believe most kids will learn and have a blast playing Amazing Math.


Special Notice!! STR Infofile        File format for Articles


                     File Format for STReport

     All articles submitted to STReport for publication must be sent in the following format.  Please use the format requested.  Any files received that do not conform will not be used.  The article must be in an importable word processor format for Word 7.0.. The margins are .05" left and 1.0" Monospaced fonts are not to be used.  Please use proportional fonting only and at eleven points.

´•     No Indenting on any paragraphs!!
´•     No Indenting of any lines or "special gimmickery"
´•     No underlining!
´•     Columns shall be achieved through the use of tabs only.  Or, columns
          in Word format.  Do NOT use the space bar.
´•     No ASCII "ART"!!
´•     There is no limits as to size, articles may be split into two if
          lengthy
´•     Actual Artwork should be in GIF, PCX, JPG, TIF, BMP, WMF file formats
´•     Artwork (pictures, graphs, charts, etc.)should be sent along with the
          article separately
´•     Please use a single font only in an article.  TTF CG Times 12pt. is
          preferred. (VERY Strong Hint)

     If there are any questions please use either E-Mail or call.    On another note. the ASCII version of STReport is fast approaching the "end of the line"  As the major Online Services move away from ASCII.. So shall STReport.  All in the name of progress and improved readability.  The amount of reader mail expressing a preference for our Adobe PDF enhanced issue is running approximately 15 to 1 over the ASCII edition.  Besides, STReport will not be caught in the old, worn out "downward compatibility dodge" we must move forward.  However, if the ASCII readership remains as high, rest assured. ASCII will stay.  Right now, since STReport is offered on a number of closed major corporate networks as "required" Monday Morning reading.. Our ascii readers have nothing to worry themselves about.

Many grateful thanks in advance for your enthusiastic co-operation and input.

                         Ralph F. Mariano,  Editor
                         STReport International Online Magazine




Gaming Hotwire STR Feature - The World of Contemporary Gaming

Featuring the Action from;

N64 NewsWire  STR Feature  N64 Sparking a Resurgence for Gaming Consoles

It appears as if Nintendo of America has intentions of bringing Mother 3 over to the U.S. They referred to it as Earthbound 64 throughout their Shoshinkai coverage. The game is supposed to be released in Japan six months after the 64DD comes out.  Star Fox 64 is referred to by Mr. Miyamoto as "like a 3-D movie."  There's all kinds of real-time cinema scenes in the game that can change depending on what happens during your previous missions.

### JoltPak To Ship Separately

The Jolting Pak accessory was developed with a fishing game in mind. Yes, a fishing game. They decided it  would work well with other games, too. The Jolting Pak will be released before the fishing game.

### F-Zero 64 Development Confirmed

F-Zero 64 is very early in development. Mr. Miyamoto stated, "The main programmer is studying a lot of physics." It's supposed to be out by the end of 1997 (at least in Japan.)

### PENGUIN TO BECOME A REGULAR

Remember that lovable penguin that you race down the slide in Super Mario 64?  Well listen to what Mr.  Miyamoto said about him, "Speaking of the penguin, we wanted to put it in every game, but some of the  other development teams didn't want to use our penguin." The penguin currently appears in Wave Race 64  and Mario Kart 64, other than Super Mario 64. How do you get the penguin in Wave Race 64? You have to  take first place on every Championship Mode race prior to the Cool Wave board. It's a small, swimming  penguin that appears in the water.

### LIGHTING EFFECTS TO BE THE NORM

Future Nintendo 64 games will take advantage of lighting effects. Thanks to the extra CPU power just sitting  there, they can make smarter enemies, do real-time lighting and manage characters that aren't even visible on  the screen. Star Fox 64 and Zelda 64 take advantage of lots of different effects and light sources.

### THIRD PARTY GAMES NEARING COMPLETION

Zelda 64 is currently about 50% finished and on track for a (Japanese) release at the end of 1997. They seem to emphasis that the game is very action-packed.  Hudson Soft told Nintendo during Shoshinkai that "after a slow start, development of Bomberman 64 is now well under way."  Wondering how Goldeneye could be  ready for a March 28, 1997 release in the U.S. when the game wasn't even playable at Shoshinkai?  Apparently those crafty developers over at Rare have been keeping the game under wraps. The game is a lot further along than we were led to believe.  Clay Fighter III is now known as Clay Fighter Extreme. The game is coming out in May and is compatible  with the Jolting Pak! The game looks great with incredible clay combatants and 3-D fighting arenas.  There's  actual Dark Rift (a 3-D

fighting game to be published by Vic Tokai) pics, too. The game is
scheduled to  come out in the 2nd or 3rd quarter of 1997.

## ST. ANDREW'S GOLF

Seta is currently looking for a North American publisher for their St.
Andrew's Old Course Golf. There's a  very good chance someone will pick it
up.  WCW Wrestling is a fully 3-D wrestling game. It's coming out  in the
fall of 1997.  It's official. Paradigm Simulation, Inc. is developing Sonic
Wings Assault for Video  Systems in Japan. There's a very good chance
someone will pick it up for U.S. release.

## 3DO GUYS DEVELOPING FOR N64!

3DO (yes, the guys who developed the 3DO and M2 hardware) is developing a
Nintendo 64 game! As hard as it may be to believe, they are working on
Battle Sport II for the system.   Titus has several N64 titles in the
works. The off and on rumored Crazy Cars is supposed to be their second
title after Lamborghini 64 (which is coming out in the 2nd quarter of
1997.)

## THIRD PARTY DEVS LINE UP

Westwood Studios has just started working on Command & Conquer for the
Nintendo 64. And, after some  mid-development trouble, Freak Boy is back on
the development track with a new producer at Virgin.  Playmates is working
on an N64 title featuring the Jungle Bots. Interplay has several other
titles in  development including Actua Golf and possibly another game now
entitled Raze. Ocean may publish another  N64 title called Ascension.
Finally, TecMagik is working on two titles: Deadly Honor and Rotor Gunners.

Ever wonder what happened to Buggie Boogie? Besides the Angel Studios
development team full steam on  the development of Major League Baseball
Featuring Ken Griffey Jr., it has been revealed that Buggie  Boogie is
going to be a 64DD games thanks to all its customizable features. This
probably explains why the  game has disappeared. If you remember correctly,
Creator disappeared too, but it was established awhile ago  that Creator
would be a 64DD title.

## BASKETBALL TITLE IN THE WINGS?

The latest rumor from the sports arena is that Anfernee "Penny" Hardaway of
the Orlando Magic could be  lending his name and talents to a basketball
game for the Nintendo 64.  Penny apparently had talks with a  Japanese
video game company during his basketball trip to Japan earlier this year.
It's speculated that the company he had talks with was Nintendo. At any
rate, because of basketball's booming popularity in Japan,  we could easily
see a Nintendo-made basketball game in the near future.


N64 & Super Mario 64 STR Review  A-Z, Stunning, Simply Stunning!



                    Taking a GOOD look at the N64 and Mario


Introduction of First of six articles

By Ralph F. Mariano

     Always being the skeptic, I kept telling myself don't allow yourself
to get wrapped up in the hype and hustle over the new game machines.  Well
I too have seen the light.  I might add it is a blindingly bright light.  I
have TWO 64 bit machines and one 32bit machines now.  For almost a year. I
had one 64bit machine and one 32bit machine.  The 64bit machine I had for a
little over a year is the Atari Jaguar with the CDRom and a number of extra
accessories including an extra controller and S-Video cable.   The Sony
PlayStation is also similarly equipped and also has a memory card for each
controller.  The N64 on the other hand awaits additional controllers and an
S-Video cable.

     The machine arrived here on Christmas Eve. it was setup and running in
no time at all.  I asked my oldest son to look it over as I was in over my
eyebrows in getting the all the Holiday trimmings done.  Once this was
accomplished I joined my son.  His first remark was he liked the mini-
joystick built into the controller.  Admittedly, once I tried it ..I liked
it too.  As I watched the young folks trying out the games for the N64, I
recalled all the hype I was fed about the other 64bit machine the shelf in
the E-Center.

I began to notice a great deal of oohs and aahs while Mario was being put
to task.  Why is it I never heard that with the other 64bit machine?  In
any case, this is about the N64 not the failed Jaguar 64.  While we are
only at 33 stars with Mario, the quality of the graphics is darn
hypnotically sweet and the music is more than enjoyable.  The scrolling is
as smooth as anything on the market billed as tomorrow's graphic
technology.  The bottom line is simple; the N64 has.. with Super Mario 64,
one of the most important of features and benefits for any gaming console.
It has the  highest of Entertainment Factors.  I can tell you now, once
this issue of STReport is done its back to gathering stars.

     If any of you are hoping for a machine by machine. blow by blow
comparison you're in for a disappointment.  You see, the TWO most popular
machines on the market both have high marks at this time  in most every
category.  Sort of like trying to compare a top of the line Cadillac to a
top of the line Lincoln.  It's a hopeless, if not futile, effort.  I will
say this.. all others need not apply.  In fact, my prediction is that by
the end of the second quarter 1997 this shakeout will be complete leaving
only the N64 and the PSX in existence.

     1997 is going to be a very interesting year for the high tech gaming
industry.  Sega is definitely leaning heavily toward a software only
operation.  This perhaps the wisest of wise moves for this company if it is
to remain a major player in the gaming marketplace.  Sony and Nintendo have
certainly re-wrote the rule book and the guidelines relative to the "making
of and keeping a winning lead" in the gaming business.

     We will look at BOTH the PSX with its top contender Crash Bandicoot
and the N64 with its top contender Super Mario 64.  Not in a comparative
way but hopefully via a consumer's viewpoint.  You'll never see me throw a
bunch of boring specs at you as they simply do not tell the true story of a
product's performance.  The "E" Factor is really what it is all about.
That is the direction we will take.

     Next week, the first actual article about the N64 and it's fast
growing library.

Classic Computers & Entertainment Section
Editor Dana P. Jacobson


From the Atari Editor's Desk                "Saying it like it is!"


Two major holidays down, one to go!  Phew!  Hope you all had a terrific
holiday.  Personally, mine was fairly quiet for a change - only had to
manage three "shots" of cognac with my neighbor/landlord (he had the flu!).
I stayed away from the in-laws this year; my wife suffered alone.  Boy, I
owe her big time! <g>

It's hard to believe another year of Atari coverage in STReport has passed.
Who would have thought there would still be interest?  Well, other than me!
We still get numerous requests each week to subscribe through the Internet.
In fact, I recently received requests from about a dozen readers in Peru!
We've welcomed an old friend, Michael Burkley (that Unabashed Atariophile)
to our family; and we're ready to welcome another familiar online name in
the coming weeks.

We've also completed another year at Toad Hall BBS, out 9th!  I can't
believe that I've been running Toad Hall for this long; we're one of the
few remaining Atari support boards in the northeast.  And, our numbers are
rapidly depleting.  We're still running two systems, on two lines.  The
MichTron system is still running strong on the primary line (617-567-8642)
while we're still "testing" the RAT-Soft system on the second line (617-569-
2489) and waiting for that elusive larger hard drive.  We've acquired a CD
drive for the Rat-Soft system and we have two good leads for donations for
a large hard drive or two.  We hope to expand this system in January -
including more storage, CD access, networking, and much more.  Give us a
call and see what all the excitement is all about!

So, while it's been an interesting year - sometimes slow and occasionally
hectic - we foresee a similar year in 1997.  We hope you'll be there with
us!

Have a terrific New Year's and please, drive carefully AND sober!  Until
next time...



                    Entertainment Section

PSX Tops!  Towers II!
Breakout 2000!
Twisted Metal 2!
And more!



From the Editor's Controller  -  Playin' it like it is!


Who said the Jaguar is dead?  While Atari is essentially gone and the
Jaguar not supported by Atari's "partners", JTS Corporation, the games have
started to re-appear with the likes of Towers II and Breakout 2000.  And,
more are possible to see the light of day in 1997: Worms, World Tour

Racing, Iron Soldier 2, and possibly others.  Time will tell...  Most of
the online response to the Jaguar's latest games have been favorable, with
a few nit-picks regarding a few points in the games.

Now that the holidays are passed, I hope to take a look at Towers II any
day now and finally get to see what I've been looking forward to playing
with regard to a Jaguar RPG.  In this issue, we're including the full
storyline of Towers II, courtesy of JV Enterprises.  They also sent us some
grey-scale pictures.  If you're interested in viewing these pictures, send
me e-mail at: dpj@delphi.com and I'll forward them to you.  It's been a
short week, so I'm not going to take up a lot of your reading time this
week.  Let's get to the news and information!

Until next time...


Industry News STR Game Console NewsFile  -  The Latest Gaming News!


                 PlayStation Game Console Continues to Outperform


FOSTER CITY, CALIF. (Dec. 23) BUSINESS WIRE -Dec. 23, 1996--The facts speak
for themselves.   Sony Computer Entertainment America, marketers of the
PlayStation game console and leading software  developers for the platform,
has the leading next generation video game system.  Following are a few
weeks  in the life of the PlayStation brand. With worldwide sales nearing
10 million units, and a North American  installed base fast approaching 3
million units, the numbers support the number one position of the
PlayStation brand.

´•    December 17, 1996 - North American hardware and software revenues for
         the PlayStation brand have,  through December 1, exceeded $1 billion, wi
th
         significant additional revenues expected during the holiday  season.
´•    December 17, 1996 - The PlayStation game console has achieved a
         critical mass far faster than expected.   More than two million PlayStat
ion
         game consoles have already been sold in North America, and one million
         more are expected to be sold by the end of the 1996; three million
         cumulative.
´•    December 10, 1996 - In order to keep pace with overwhelming consumer
         demand this holiday season, Sony  Computer Entertainment America shipped

         "emergency" supplies of PlayStation game consoles into North America. Ev
en
         with worldwide hardware production increased to one million units a mont
h,
         retailers report that they cannot be supplied with PlayStation game
         consoles fast enough.
´•    December 10, 1996 - According to Jim McKenzie, senior buyer, Kay-Bee
         Toys, "Last year, the PlayStation  was one of the top holiday items at
         Kay-Bee Toy stores.  It's unprecedented in our business to see a product

         return with even greater consumer demand a full year later.  But,
         unbelievably, the PlayStation is even hotter in 1996 than last year."
´•    December 3, 1996 - With nearly 200 titles available for the
         PlayStation game console, software is selling at an unprecedented rate o

f
          six titles to each PlayStation sold.  This 6-to-1 ratio represents an
          all-time high for the U.S. videogame industry.
´•    December 2, 1996 - According to more than 3,000 program participants
          at the 7th annual Toy Test, sponsored by "CBS This Morning," the
          PlayStation game console is the system of choice.

Six games available exclusively for the PlayStation game console were voted
the most popular videogames for the holiday selling season, including:
´•    Crash Bandicoot, published by Sony Computer Entertainment America
´•    Tekken 2, published by Namco Hometek -- Project: Horned Owl, published
          by Sony Computer Entertainment America
´•    Star Gladiator, published by Capcom Entertainment
´•    Tobal No. 1, published by Sony Computer Entertainment America
´•    Twisted Metal 2, published by Sony Computer Entertainment America.


                    Twisted Metal 2 is a Runaway Hit for Playstation

FOSTER CITY, CALIF. (Dec. 23) BUSINESS WIRE -Dec. 23, 1996--Sony Computer
Entertainment America reported today that Twisted Metal 2 for the
PlayStation game console is one of the standout hits of this holiday
season.   After only six weeks, Twisted Metal 2 has already shipped more
than 300,000 units with additional retailer reorders continuing.

"Twisted Metal 2 should be the fastest first-party title to reach half a
million units in sales," said Jack  Tretton, vice president, sales, Sony
Computer Entertainment America.  "This really speaks to the huge  success
of the PlayStation overall.  As the installed base of the PlayStation
continues to rise at its rapid pace,  we should see numerous hit titles
selling 500,000 copies or more in 1997.  In fact, NFL GameDay '97 and Crash
Bandicoot will soon reach this remarkable milestone."

"Sales of Twisted Metal 2 have been extraordinary since the day it hit our
shelves," said Gary Arnold, vice president of marketing, Best Buy. "Titles
like Twisted Metal 2 continue to drive the outstanding sales success we
have obtained since the launch of the PlaStation."

Twisted Metal 2, which arrived on retail shelves in early November, is a
high-action, car-to-car combat  game that puts players in control of
heavily armed vehicles.  Gameplayers hunt down their opponents  through
incredibly rendered, 3D environments.  There are no pre-set tracks,
allowing gameplayers to comb through city streets, interact with elements
in the environments -- including blowing up world landmarks -- and do
whatever it takes to defeat the competition.


Jaguar Cheats, & Hints STR InfoFile  -  Solving Those Riddles!

                         Towers II Hints!

 1a. How do you unlock the gold doors on the first level?
 1b. I am wandering around the first 3 levels, and I can't go farther?


 A. Custodians have the responsibility of cleaning up all of the rooms in
the tower. Try talking to them about keys. If they don't respond to
pleasantries, well you know what to do next!

 2. I'm on the 2nd level in the chain room, what order do I pull the
chains in?

A. One of the thieves gives you a hint on which chain to pull first. You
know what chain to pull last by looking at the punctuation of the phrase
on the scroll. Then it's just a matter of finding out which order to pull
the other two chain levers in. Remember, it's a poem. If you make a
mistake, you can always pull the reset chain, and try again.

3. There are 3 Iron Golems, guarding an entrance, that I can't kill! How
do I get past them?

A. Those Iron Golems are pretty tough. In fact, chances are that nothing
you possess right now can even hurt them. So, our best advice it to  leave
them be; at least for now.

4. What do you do with those tornado looking creatures (air elementals),
they are not effected by anything?

A. They are made of air, everything goes through them. You need to find a
spell that can affect air. Talk to the thief, down a pit, in the earth
elemental area. You know, earth elementals, those creatures with no legs
that hit really hard! Don't forget to make sure you have a way back up the
pit, or you'll be trapped just like the thief.

5. I fully charged the mace, but there is a door in the water elemental
area that I can't unlock?

A. When you teleported into the library, there was a scroll that talked
about the mishap on the upper levels, and how it was resolved. It read in
part, "... Using the Mace, I have sealed the only exits to those floors.
The Mace of Elements, which alone can unlock the door, has been
drained..."


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Entertainment Online STR InfoFile    -    Online Users Growl & Purr!


Towers II - Storyline



                    PLIGHT OF THE STARGAZER


It has been several months since we've been in Lamini.  The repairs to our
ship are almost complete and the crews morale is finally on the rise.
We've heard no news on the wars in Airatose, we've heard no news at all.
No information seems to reach or leave this dungeon of an island.

At first, when we ran aground, I thought this was paradise.  But having to
go through what we have, I would have considered being in one of Sargon's
torture cells, paradise.  At the time of the wreck, we were alive, and

that's all that mattered.  Now I realize, time soothes the emotions and things appear as they truly are.

As I've stated before there is no information, not just about Airatose, but anything.  This island seems to be cut off from the rest of reality.  No one will talk about anything, besides the current affairs here on Lamini.  All the people of power seem to be extreme wielders of magic and there is no real outside trade. So how did these mages become so wealthy.

Just some very strange questions I've been tossing around in my head, that no one wants to answer. I'm wondering if we should become more involved with these peoples affairs, perhaps they could help us with the war in Airatose, after all Sargon poses a threat to us all. I wonder.

There have been rumors of Lamini's elite guards, not returning from a quest.  We've been asked to see Farale, the new sheriff.  We entered Farale's office.  A stout man in his later ages sat behind a desk.  We quickly exchanged greetings and he began to speak about a lord named Daggan.

"Lord Daggan was once a good man, who held one of the high seats on the council.  He was an avid  astronomer, who made many discoveries.  Then one day he resigned his commission, stating only that his research takes precedence over any problems we might have."

"Strange happenings soon followed.  Mighty explosions were seen at his tower, but when examined, not a trace of damage.  Also, e's been seen excavating bones out of the mystic's graveyard.  When the council  inquired about his doings, he flew into a screaming rage.  Yelling that everyone should leave him alone, he then burnt down several villager's homes.  Thankfully no one was hurt."  "At that point we knew he had gone mad, and must be stopped. All knights and sages who held a chair on the Lamini council, were sent to either make him come to his senses or destroy him.  They never returned."

"Several well known thieves were spotted leaving Daggan's tower with bags full of treasure.  We caught and questioned one of the hoodlums. What he confessed to us was truly amazing.  He spoke of Daggan's guards being very dim witted and that sneaking around them was very easy especially for a man of his talents.  He also spoke of strange beings, the likes that I have never heard.  Eyes with large wings that fly and wield powerful magic.  Creatures made out of the earth itself.  Giant men made of iron, living fire and other unnatural beings."

"Also inside the tower, just lying around the floors were the bones and weapons of previous looters who  were not so quick for Daggan's guards.  Feces from animals, that were never picked up. This is very strange  for Daggan, he was normally a very tidy and neat man.  It seems that his tower, which is still in the process  of being built, is falling apart. Normally we wouldn't have believed a word of what this thief was saying, but it was the way he told his story.  You could just feel the unbelievable truth."

"Once again we ask you to help us with our problems.  We feel that sending only one of you in, to stop Daggan, is to our best advantage. He would never expect only one man.  Here is a letter from the thief. It gives pictures and descriptions of the creatures you might encounter."  "The reward we have to offer is very small, but anything you find in Daggan's tower is yours to keep.  When you return, a small keep will be built for you.  Thus you will always have a home in Lamini."

"This quest is very importan to us.  Perhaps if you decide to help us, we could help you in some way with your problems in Airatose. Unfortunately this is all we have to offer.  I plead with you to take this quest, Lord Daggan must be killed.  We cannot let his new found madness and evil grow."

THIEF'S DRAWINGS & DESCRIPTIONS

Heed my warning of what I am about to describe.  For death awaits inside Daggan's tower. I did not dare enter any further into this house of horrors, so do not take this as the last word on all the terror that lurk inside.

Associates - Throughout the tower, I'm sure you'll run into many of my associates.  Many of those fools are still there, their greed leading them on.  Most of them can not be trusted.  If you catch one by surprise, then be quick with your blade.  Some might try to coax you into helping them. As far as I know, some might have joined Daggan's guards for a small price.

Custodian - The custodian is the keeper of the lower levels.  This lazy, ill tempered man, is responsible for keeping the tower sparkling clean. As humble as this man seems, beware.  He is armed and trained in the use of a mop, and is a formidable opponent.  In my exploration of the tower, I chose to leave him alone.

Daggan's guards - Lord Daggan, has hired many guards to keep intruders out of his tower.  These guards are not the most brilliant or fast, but they have been instructed to kill on site.  They swing their swords unmercifully and their fighting skills are unmatched.  I have seen many of my friends fall underneath their blades.

Floating Eyes - I have no true name for these terrors.  They appear as large eyes with wings.  I have only  found them in the back rooms of the tower, behind various secret doors.  Constantly searching their surroundings for intruders.  These creatures are relatively weak in nature, but they harness great magical powers.  If they find a target, they will attack it with an onslaught of blue balls of mystical energy. Be wary though, for they fly with little sound and attack with the speed of light.

Iron Golem - Should a man become a mountain and have the strength of a god. He would not stand a chance against these golems.  This giant metal being was somehow bestowed with life.  He swings a giant sword as easily as I would swing a stick.  I have seen him cut down three associates of mine, with a single blow.  My contempt and fear of this soulless creature is beyond words.  My only advice -- Should you hear the ground echo with a thunderous foot step, don't waste the time to think, just run.

Men of the Earth - I was in heaven if only for a minute.  Diamonds and pearls all about me.  I heard it, and  then I saw it!  The earth itself moved and shook the ground I was walking on.  I spun around to see a strange  and distorted creature with no legs.  His arms and body were as big as boulders and looked as if it was made from mud and stone.  My friend, gasped for air when he saw this horror.  Thinking quick, I grabbed my friend and used him as a shield between me and the stone man.  I could hear his bones crack from the unbelievable strength of this creature.  I grabbed what few items I found and ran as ast as my feet could carry me.  I will never enter that place again.  It is truly a place for the foolish.

The Story of:

GERAND - Born on a small Island off the coast of Broken wing. Gerand
followed in the footsteps of his father, a great an well known duelist.
Taught in the art of war by his father, Gerand helped repel Sargon's
advancing army in Graystone, where he received most of his scars.  In the
battle for Graystone, Gerand saw his father killed as Sargon's Carrion
fighters over ran him, nine to one.  Now 34, Gerand swears to rid this
world of Sargons evil. He was on the way to Airatose, to help with their
battle, before being side tracked to Lamini.

TASLER - Man of 19, he hates to be called boy.  Continually ridiculed by
his older and more experienced brothers, Tasler set out to prove that he
was their equal and more.  Bent on bringing back Sargons head, he is very
unsure of his skills and very nervous should he actually encounter Sargon.

On the trip to Airatose, when tension was high, the scribe Marimure
accidentally set fire to the ship while practicing a magic trick.  He was
quickly accused of treason. In an act of bravery, Tasler stood toe to toe
with a man twice his size and three times his experience to defend this
unknown scribe.  Gerand apologized for his unwarranted reaction and all
three became friends.  ANDROS - Andros was once a trapeze artist in a
circus.  Performing for hundreds of children and moving from town to town.

He loved to play practical jokes to make everyone laugh, often forgetting
that most people don't have his reflexes. He would later feel guilty when
someone got hurt, only to forget what he did and play the same gag the next
day.  When Sargon started waging war, the circus soon disbanded as the
people no longer had the money to afford such a luxury. Andros pledged to
help stop this evil so the children could once again enjoy his antics.

Playing a practical joke on Gerand, a man with little sense of humor,
Andros soon found himself dodging various blows.The entire ship was
laughing as he made a mockery of Gerand's fighting skill.  In the heat of
the excitement, Andros ducked when he should have weaved. Waking up, he
found himself hanging upside down with a pounding headache.  Looking on, he
could see a herbal remedy just out of reach and Gerand in the corner of the
room, arms crossed, chuckling.

MERTON - Student of the Circle Crest Mages and Heir to the Throne of
Storion, Merton left his land utterly bored with his families' continual
squabbling over politics.  Exploring the realm and challenging any mage
that made a claim to power.  He headed to Airatose to engage Sargon in a
one on one duel.  While on board the ship, he talked with the nameless
wizard. He found out that the nameless one once worked for Sargon, but when
he found out about Sargon's true plans, he tried to stop him.  The nameless
one was almost killed before he narrowly escaped.

Merton, arrogantly called the nameless one's magic weak, just before the
storm hit.  As the magical storm consumed the ship and lightning littered
the deck, the nameless one fought with all his might as Merton just watched
in awe.  Finally he could see just how powerful the nameless one truly was,
and how powerful Sargon must be.  For the first time Merton felt as small
as a leaf, in a realm of trees.

After the storm, Merton stood mesmerized at the dying body of the nameless
one.  If he was going to become one of the great mages, he must research
much higher realms of knowledge. For him to defeat Sargon, would be one of
life's great opportunities for all to observe.

```
Sb: Breakout 2000
Fm: Mario Perdue 71524,207
To: All

FWIW,


                          Breakout 2000

Each of the first 5 'phases' of Breakout 2000 adds new features to the
brick layouts. Here's the progression:

Phase 0 - No stacked bricks
          No Bridges
          No Multi-hit bricks
          No unbreakable bricks

Phase 1 - 2 level Stacks of normal bricks
          No Bridges
          2 hit bricks
          No unbreakable bricks

Phase 2 - 2 level Stacks of multi-hit bricks
          No Bridges
          Multi-hit bricks
          Unbreakable bricks

Phase 3 - 3 level Stacks of multi-hit bricks
          Simple Bridges
          Multi-hit bricks
          Unbreakable bricks

Phase 4 - 3 level Stacks of multi-hit and unbreakable bricks
          Bridges with multi-hit and unbreakable bricks
          Multi-hit bricks
          Unbreakable bricks

Also, as you progress through the phases, the paddle gets smaller and the
ball gets faster.

How many people have gotten passed Phase 1?

Mario



                    Hark, the Herald Angels Scream...


                     Hark the Herald Angels SCREAM
                    no one hears the words they sing
                   for neath the boughs of ever green
                    midst the wraps of red and sheen
                     tied with bows of satin white
                  themes sorrow cradled that slumber night.

                   There were parcels large and some petite
                 there was one quite long and another smelled sweet
                   there were tags for Mom and sometimes Lover
                     some marked Mike, Michael or Brother
                    others did say simply Sister or Susan
```

and some of the ones were for Dad or for Rueben.

                       Now all the paper is crumbled and torn
                         not one gift is left still adorned
                        some bows are saved for another year
                       most are battered and tattered, we fear
                      and all the while; during joyful festivity
                        no VCS, no 8-bit, no Antic, no ST.

                        In years gone by; not all long ago
                        Mount Fuji stood tall; its pride aglow
                       it inspired and nurtured millions of souls
                      it marketed great things and set all the rules
                     there were games and computers and printers and mice
                    there were joysticks and modems and drives that were nice.

                       Yet lo in the present there's no present to be
                       that's wrapped ith the factor of fun from Atari
                      this year Jack The Santa; J.T.S. to be quite sure
                         took funds once marked for gamers so pure
                       and with disk drives that ship pairs at a time
                       there's no money for gamers, not hardly a dime.

                       Yet Christmas is perfect to remember the past
                      the Tempests, the Asteroids, the game names that last
                       and no one demands to know where they have gone
                        the silence just deafens as new systems move on
                     and through all, we shall treasure that precious green tree
                        next year when J.T.S. absorbs the tree industry.

        Donald A. Thomas, Jr. (75300.1267@compuserve.com) believing that the
                              tremendous success of
        today's systems has meaningful roots that should not be forgotten.
        (c) Christmas, 1996 Please freely reprint or resend with author's credit.

ONLINE WEEKLY STReport OnLine   The wires are a hummin'!

                           PEOPLE... ARE TALKING

 On CompuServe

Compiled by Joe Mirando
CIS ID: 73637,2262

     Well friends and neighbors, it looks like I've survived yet another
holiday. It seems that every year there are more and more fools on the
road, more fools in the stores, and more fools at work, and even more fools
in government (I didn't think that was possible!).   It's times like this
that I just want to throw my hands up and yell "Bah, humbug". Then I find
myself doing strange things. Things like pausing at a stop sign to let

someone else go first, or going out of my way to get a box of pasta down
from a high shelf in the grocery store for an older woman. I find myself
doing things like that more and more as Christmas gets closer and closer.
I see a few other people doing the same kinds of things but, by and large,
most of the people I meet up with are, shall we say, 'humbug-worthy'.
<grin>

     You never know where I might be or what I might look like, so don't
take the chance that I'll be the guy behind you in a store, or in the car
that you try so hard to beat to the intersection. I'd hate to have to yell
"HUMBUG" at you, okay? This coming Tuesday night is one of the most lethal
nights of the year so be careful no matter where you are. Remember: You
don't need alcohol to make mistakes, it simply raises the odds. I no
longer go out to celebrate New Year's Eve because of those mistakes (both
mine and those of others). I've also found that it's usually more fun to
stay close to home, in the company of a few good friends. Whatever you
decide to do, please do it safely.

Well, let's take a look at what's going on in the Atari world.

From the Atari Computing Forums

James Spielman posts:
"In case you'd like CIS to know what you think....

                    Take the Customer Service Survey

Have a question about CompuServe? Take it to the experts in Customer
Service. Get answers in real-time conferences in the Customer Service
Live area, as well as by telephone or fax. CompuServe is committed to
providing you with the very best customer service that meets your needs.
What do you think of Customer Service? Are your needs being met? GO
CSISERVICE to take the Customer Service Survey and tell CompuServe about
your experiences with Customer Service and ideas you may have for how
CompuServe can best help you in the future. In addition, you can help
CompuServe evaluate proposed alternatives to serve you even better. Your
responses will help CompuServe continue to improve Customer Service! The
time you spend taking the survey is free from CompuServe connect-time
charges, although communication surcharges may apply.

Meanwhile, in the discussion about "twister" formatting floppy disks, Mark
Kimball posts:
"Regarding the two Twister code files, I believe that what I have
_does_change the serial number. The Disk Mech program is still around,
and has shown that the normal disk format is not twisted. Interestingly,
it also has been able to copy some copy-protected disks I have (ONLY for
backup purposes; most of the software sources have seemed to dry up)."

Albert Dayes tells Mark:
"Disk Mech is a very good program. It was very useful for reading sampler
disks too. I believe it reads the entire track at a time rather than
sector by sector method."

Bill Anderson asks:
"Can anybody tell me why Pagestream loads so slowly on a Falcon? More
important, can anything be done to make it load faster? I solved the
problem on the TT and the Mega before that by using Pin Head. Some
examples: Mega 4 without Pinhead= 35 seconds. With, 5 seconds TT030 without
Pinhead= 1 minute, 14 seconds. With, 3 seconds. Falcon without Pinhead, 2

minutes, 15 seconds. With, 2 minutes, 15 seconds. Setting the fastload bit
with PRGFLAGS.PRG doesn't seem to make any difference on any of the
machines. Anybody already solved this problem, or am I the only one who
has this problem?"

Carl Barron tells Bill:
"Set the fast load bit on all import export modules that pagestream loads.
It will then load much faster. Doing this on my TT got pagestream to load
almost as fast as any comparibly large program."

Joe Villarreal adds:
"I had that problem on my Mega Ste when I first started using Pagestream.
It took forever to load, comparable to the two minutes you mentioned. At
the time I had Speedo GDOS installed. Later on I removed Speedo GDOS and
noticed that Pagestream just took a few seconds to load. I can't be 100%
sure that Speedo GDOS was the culprit since I have a lot of programs in my
auto folder and am always adding and removing programs from the folder,
but I'm pretty sure. I was also using a Nova Vme Plus graphics card with
the Mega Ste at the time."

Bill tells Joe:
"I use X-Boot and do not load GDOS when using Pagestream. I am using Screen-
Blaster on the Falcon. I'll try it without and see what happens."

Marcos Sanchez asks for help:
"I have a Mega STE that came with a 720 KB disk drive. I have replaced it
with a 1.44 MB. It recognises 1.44 disks from a PC (the directory comes
out all right), but eventually fails to read data. I suspect it's not
reading "the other half" of the disk. I appreciate any comments. Greetings
from Madrid."

Our old pal and intellectual powerhouse, Albert Dayes, tells Marcos:
"It depends on your floppy controller chip. It sounds like you need an Ajax
chip upgrade. What version of TOS does your Mega STE have?"

In the Atari Gaming section,
Paul Harris asks a simple question: "What ever happend to Battlesphere?"
Larry Tipton tells Paul:
"Last I heard was that Telegames might market it along with Iron Solder II
if they sell through enough of the other four games that they are
currently selling and or publishing within the next 2 months. I have not
heard a peep from 4-Play lately."

Emile Pesik adds:
"Let's hope that IS2 will still be released and if so, that it has some WOW
graphics that utilize the Jag's power. I would be one of the first to buy
IS2!!! All of you out there that have not yet bought the new games
released by Telegames: GO AND GET THOSE GAMES SO TELEGAMES WILL RELEASE
SOME MORE FOR OUR FAVORITE CONSOLE!!!!"

Mario Perdue posts:
"It has come to my attention that there is a small bug in Breakout 2000.
The manual states that "Breaking an opponents bricks score twice the
normal value." Well, it used to anyway. It seems that feature doesn't work
anymore. Sorry about that."

James McClure asks:
"Hey, what's the deal with my Missile Command 3-D? The 3-D version freezes
on after the first wave of missiles when remaining cities etc. are posted.
Original and Virtual MC no problem."

Larry Tipton tells James:
"I have the same problem with my copy. Apparently certain revs of the
Jaguar hardware feature this unfortunate bug."

Albert Dayes adds:
"I had the same problem with the beta version of MC-3D. It appears it is
only certain machines that have that problem."

Emile Pesik posts:
"Last weekend I went to SEGA Quanta in Lausanne (an arcade hall, owned by
SEGA) and played Area 51, a Virtua Cop like game with FMV graphics
combined with some stunning HiRes rendered graphics in fluid 3D motion.
The way the graphics were done and the FMV sequences (the intro showing the
Time Warner logo etc.) was very, very much the way the Jaguar (and CD)
does it. It seemed to be exactly the same compression method as the Jag-
CD uses, the same resolution, the same type of color graphics. The machine
is an Atari machine from 1996.

Coincidence ??

Is there anybody that knows whether this console is indeed based on a
Jaguar or is it just my fantasy... So far it's the only coin-up I have
seen that looks damn much like a Jaguar. If it is true, then it would
definately be game that should be released on Jag-CD: it fun to play,
looks excellent and would show what the Jag+CD is capable of."

Albert Dayes tells Emile:
"Area 51 does use a Jaguar with additional enhancements to make it work. It
is very addicting game I played for about 2 hours non-stop. Never again
... it is good if you like to a truely raw trigger finger. <g> Time
Warner has a web site (pathfinder) it has a section on Atari Games coin-op
including Area 51 and T-Mek. For Area 51 it gives you hints at all 14
secret rooms ... if you have not found them already ... try shooting all
the windows and you may find something interesting."

Richard Turner adds:
"The AREA 51 game does indeed use Atari Jaguar 64 technology, and I've got
links from "Jaguar 64 Just Claws" to the Area 51 pages. It is based on
the CO-JAG hardware which is basically the Jaguar chipset along with a
68020 instead of a 68000, and more RAM, and some additional sound hardware.
Basically though the Jaguar is capable of running this game from CD, the
68020 and the RAM are as a result of the additional demands of an arcade
system. Area 51 has just been released for the PC and is coming for the
Saturn and PSX (unfortunately there's no port for the Jaguar) but it does
tell one that a Jaguar developer could do a similar game.

For more information on this and other hardware, see my pages:-
        Jaguar 64 Just Claws
        http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/rj_turner/jaghome.htm"

Tom Harker of ICD and 4-Play tells Emile:
"As far as I know, The Co-jag used in Area 51 has more than 2MB of Ram
(which the stock Jag has) and spools all of the screens from a fast hard
drive not a CD."

    Well folks, that's about it for this week. Before too much longer
we'll have a few more surprises for you in the way of Atari coverage and
support. Familiar names, lots of information and help, and a whole new
attitude. 'Till then, always be ready to listen to what they are saying

when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

EDITORIAL QUICKIES

Happy New Year!!

STReport International OnLine Magazine

[S]ilicon [T]imes [R]eport
HTTP://WWW.STREPORT.COM
AVAILABLE through the Internet and OVER 250,000 BBS SYSTEMS WORLDWIDE